

## Education & Development

### COMET New And Improved

The Center for Judicial Education and Research (CJER) recently debuted its redesigned Web site for court staff education. CJER anticipates that the new look for the COMET (Court Online Mentoring, Education, and Training) site will make it easier for court users to navigate and for site designers to update.

CJER solicited input from court users on the redesign of the COMET site. According to CJER staff, feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.

#### NEW FEATURES

The revision of the site did not affect its basic content, which still includes information on CJER programs, training courses, resource manuals, and online forums and tutorials. However, CJER has added a few new features. The site now contains a broadcast calendar for AOC-TV, the California courts' satellite broadcast network.

COMET also added a new online course titled Handling Change. This course is part of a core curriculum developed by CJER in coordination with court executive officers and trainers. Future offerings will include courses on court security, personal safety, ethics, and diversity.

#### COMING ATTRACTION

CJER plans to add new software, called Blackboard, to the COMET site that will allow users to participate in interactive online courses. Once the new program is up and running, local courts will be able to use Blackboard for online course development.

Court trainers will be able to take raw curricula from either the COMET site or their own materials and shape it into locally delivered online courses. As it anticipates adding the user-friendly Blackboard software to the COMET site early next year, CJER is encouraging court staff to add information and raw educational materials to its Faculty and Training section.

● For more information, contact CJER, 415-865-7745. For help in accessing the COMET Web site, court staff should contact their local training coordinator.

## RESOURCES

### Court Recruitment Brochure

The Administrative Office of the Courts' Human Resources (HR) Division has created a new recruitment brochure for California's 58 superior courts, promoting career opportunities in the courts. The brochure was developed with input from executive officers and court HR staff, whose suggestions were incorporated into the final version to reflect the needs of trial court recruitment.

The brochure lists some of the jobs available in the courts, including accountants, administrators, analysts, attorneys, clerks, court reporters, mediators/counselors, paralegals, and

secretaries. It gives job seekers a glimpse of the California courts by providing an overview of the judicial system and describing a few of the program areas in which they may be involved if hired by the courts.

● To order brochures, contact Darcel Veal Thompson, Human Resources Division, 415-865-2474; e-mail: darcel.veal@jud.ca.gov.

### Handbook On Handling Child Witnesses

In September, the Center for Judicial Education and Research (CJER) published its most recent bench handbook, which gives judges, commissioners, and referees guidance on managing child witness cases in criminal, juvenile, and family courts.

The *Child Victim Witness* handbook provides direction on monitoring and interpreting children's testimony and evaluating evidence involving children. It also discusses relevant statutes and case law on these subjects.

The handbook provides pertinent principles of child development that bench officers can consider during their cases. The introduction to the handbook states that "a child witness is not a miniature version of an adult witness, as [children] think, relate, and communicate differently than adults." Therefore, the authors suggest that cases involving children as victims and witnesses require knowledge of child development and sensitivity to children's unique status.

The child witness handbook is one in a series of handbooks that CJER has distributed to the courts in 2002. Previous guides released include the *Judges Guide to ADR*, *Jury Management*, and *Fairness and Access*.

● For more information or to request a copy of one of the handbooks, contact CJER, 415-865-7745.

### Guide on Child-Care Options

The Judicial Council's Access and Fairness Advisory Committee recently published the *Child Care Resource Guide and Roster*, a resource on child-care options for court staff.

In its final report in 1996, the council's Advisory Committee on Gender Bias in the Courts concluded that the lack of affordable child care available to court personnel has an adverse impact on productivity and morale. Job performance also appeared to be closely linked to an employee's comfort with child-care arrangements. In the report, the committee made recommendations for addressing these child-care concerns, one being to develop a resource guide for court staff.

The new guide contains a listing of child-care resource and

referral agencies in each of California's 58 counties. The roster is intended only as a resource, as the Access and Fairness Advisory Committee does not endorse or specifically recommend any of the particular agencies listed.

In addition to the roster, the guide contains information on specialized care, languages provided, parent education, and other child-care programs. A special version of the guide specifically for court administrators includes a summary of federal and state laws and regulations that govern family leave. This version is intended to help administrators answer child-care questions from employees and provide staff with a family-friendly work environment.

The Access and Fairness Advisory Committee distributed the guide to the courts last summer. The committee also posted an electronic version of the guide on its Web site at [www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/access/documents/employees.pdf](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/access/documents/employees.pdf).

● For more information, contact Clifford Alumno, Administrative Office of the Courts, staff analyst to the Access and Fairness Advisory Committee, 415-865-7683; e-mail: clifford.alumno@jud.ca.gov.

### Legislative Summary

In September, Governor Gray Davis signed into law eight bills sponsored by the Judicial Council that affect court facilities, security, workers' compensation, tort claim procedures, judicial retirement, civil practice, and legal document assistants.

In December, the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) published its annual *Court News Legislative Summary*. The summary highlights these bills, as well as all legislation passed during the most recent legislative session that affects the courts or is of general interest to the legal community. Brief descriptions of the measures are accompanied by designators indicating that the measure is of primary interest to judges, court administrators, and/or practitioners in trial or appellate courts.

The bill descriptions are intended to serve only as a guide to identifying bills of interest and are not a complete statement of statutory changes. Chaptered bills and legislative committee analyses can be accessed at [www.leginfo.ca.gov/bilinfo.html](http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/bilinfo.html).

● For more information, contact Terrie Wilfong, AOC Office of Governmental Affairs, 916-323-3121; e-mail: terrie.wilfong@jud.ca.gov. ■

### Education Director Wins National Award



At the November 1 Judicial Council meeting, Chief Justice Ronald M. George presented the 2002 Warren E. Burger Award to Karen M. Thorson, Director of the Education Division of California's Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC).

Presented annually by the National Center for State Courts, the Warren E. Burger Award recognizes individuals who have made a significant contribution to the field of court administration through management and administration, education and training, and research or consulting.

Ms. Thorson has more than 16 years of experience in court administration with an extensive background in education. In California, she is noted for implementing a curriculum-based planning model for judicial branch education, enhancing distance education with a new satellite broadcast system and increased online education, and creating an education program for AOC staff. In addition, Ms. Thorson has provided consulting services to more than 18 states and has served as faculty for the National Judicial College and the Leadership Institute in Judicial Education.



# Court Briefs

## Restorative Justice Court Opens in San Diego

The Superior Court of San Diego County launched its first restorative justice court in October with a year-long pilot project designed to repair damage to neighborhoods caused by minor crimes.

San Diego's Downtown Community Court, spearheaded by the city attorney and the Downtown San Diego Partnership, is designed to hold eligible misdemeanor offenders accountable to the community for quality-of-life offenses.

The city attorney will identify at arraignment individuals charged with such offenses as petty theft, possession of open containers, disorderly conduct, creating graffiti, and disturbing the peace. In lieu of standard fines, offenders will be offered community service. Participants may also be sentenced to drug and alcohol treatment, job training, or mental health programs to help prevent recidivism.

The Downtown San Diego Partnership is providing funding for a case coordinator to work

with the offender, monitor compliance with the postplea diversion program, and report back to the city attorney. Individuals who complete their sentences successfully will have their cases reduced or dismissed administratively, with no impact on the court calendars. Those who fail will have warrants issued for their arrest with bail set at \$5,000.

Other agencies collaborating on the project include the San Diego Police Department, the public defender, and the county's Alcohol and Drug Services. A 10-person Downtown Community Court Steering Committee composed of agency participants and community representatives will troubleshoot any problems and monitor the program's effectiveness.

● For more information, contact Marilyn Laurence, Superior Court of San Diego County, 619-531-4484.

## Fresno Offers Self-Help in Spanish

A first-of-its-kind self-help center in Fresno promises to make it easier for Spanish-speaking litigants to navigate the court sys-

tem. Many California courts have established self-help programs, but the Superior Court of Fresno County's new self-help center is the first specifically designed for Spanish-speaking litigants.

Launched on October 10, the Spanish Self-Help Education and Information Center offers assistance on guardianship, unlawful detainer, civil harassment, and family law matters. The center furnishes self-help instructions in Spanish, provides a Spanish-speaking court examiner to review court documents,

and sponsors "how-to" clinics. In addition, court interpreters can volunteer to help litigants at the center and in court in civil cases, where interpreters are often needed but not mandated.

The court received grant funding from the Judicial Council to establish the center.

● For more information, contact Judy Waterman, Superior Court of Fresno County, 559-488-1613; e-mail: [jhwatman@fresno.ca.gov](mailto:jhwatman@fresno.ca.gov).

## Court Hits the Road to Reach Community



On September 19 and 20, the Superior Court of San Bernardino County sponsored an information and job booth at the 13th annual Stater Bros. Route 66 Rendezvous. The event, a nostalgic celebration of the storied highway that crosses the United States and runs through the city of San Bernardino, transformed downtown San Bernardino into a festival of cars and car enthusiasts.

The court viewed the event as an opportunity to provide information to the public on career opportunities at the court, to answer frequently asked questions on jury service and traffic issues, and to gather information on the public's perception of the court. Those who filled out perception surveys received free gifts, including pinwheels, magnets, and lapel pins. The court collected 684 surveys that captured information such as how citizens come in contact with the court and what they suggest for improving court services. *Photo: Courtesy of the Superior Court of San Bernardino County*

## Appellate Court Outreach

### JUSTICES GO BACK TO LAW SCHOOL



*Photo: Courtesy of the Court of Appeal, First Appellate District, Division Four*

Law students at Golden Gate University in San Francisco got a firsthand look at the Court of Appeal, First Appellate District, Division Four, in action. As part of its ongoing outreach to the public, the court held a special session on October 22 at the university to allow the students to see oral argument and observe the appellate process.

### SECOND DISTRICT CONVENES IN SANTA BARBARA

On October 23, the Court of Appeal, Second Appellate District, Division Six, held oral argument in the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors hearing room.

This session marks the second time this year that Division Six has heard oral argument away from its courtroom in Ventura. It was also the third consecutive year that oral argument was held in Santa Barbara.

● For more information, contact Paul McGill, Assistant Clerk/Administrator, 805-641-4711.



*Photo: Courtesy of the Court of Appeal, Second Appellate District, Division Six*

### JUSTICES HOLD COURT FOR STUDENTS

On September 25 and 26, the Third Appellate District of the Court of Appeal held proceedings at a high school in Stockton, giving students a firsthand look at the appellate process. The visit was part of the court's award-winning outreach program, which was acknowledged by the Judicial Council last year when the court was selected for a Ralph N. Kleps Award for Improvement in Administration of the Courts. (See story in the January–February 2002 issue of *Court News*.)

On the first day of the program, the court gives students an overview of the appellate process and conducts a question-and-answer session. On the second day, the justices conduct oral argument for real cases. Schools are provided in advance with copies of the briefs and synopses of the cases so students can more easily follow the proceedings. Once the opinions have been written, copies are forwarded to the schools to allow for a follow-up discussion.



*Photo: Courtesy of the Court of Appeal, Third Appellate District*



## Reaching Out to Spanish Speakers

In an effort to increase communication between the court and the community, the Superior Court of Ventura County translated its annual report and community guide to court programs and services into Spanish. It also arranged for 17,000 copies of the report (published in a user-friendly, magazine-style format) to be distributed with the September 26 edition of *Vida*, the county's primary Spanish-language newspaper.

Earlier this year, the court distributed the English version of its 2002 annual report as an insert in the *Ventura County Star* newspaper, which is sent to 110,000 households. (See story in July–August 2002 *CourtNews*.) ■

## MILESTONES

Superior Court of Ventura County **Judge Colleen Toy White** received the Woodruff J. Deem Medal of Justice award in a ceremony held at the court on September 22. The award honors individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the cause of justice and the community.

Judge White was elected to the Ventura court in June 1994 and currently hears criminal matters.

The California Judges Association presented Superior Court of Marin County **Judge Lynn Duryee** with its Bernard S. Jefferson Award for Excellence

in Judicial Education. Judge Duryee was recognized for her commitment to judicial education, including teaching legal courses and leading educational and conference committees.

Judge Duryee was appointed to the bench in Marin County in 1993.

Retired **Judge Milton Milkes** recently returned from

a three-week assignment in the Ukraine. He provided a review of the Ukrainian legal system for the U.S. State Department. Since his retirement in 1997, Judge Milkes has made similar educational trips for both the State Department and the Fulbright Scholarship program.

Judge Milkes began his career on the bench in San Diego County in 1977. ■

## Judicial Appointments

The Governor announced the following judicial appointments in September and October 2002.

### SUPERIOR COURTS

**Monica Bachner**, Superior Court of Los Angeles County, succeeding Debra W. Yang, retired.

**Deborah L. Christian**, Superior Court of Los Angeles County, succeeding Leslie W. Light, retired.

**Manuel J. Covarrubias**, Superior Court of Ventura County, filling a newly created position.

**Delbert C. Gee**, Superior Court of Alameda County, succeeding Jennie Rhine, retired.

**Adrienne M. Grover**, Superior Court of Monterey County, succeeding Richard M. Silver, retired.

**James E. Iwasko**, Superior Court of Santa Barbara County, succeeding Eugene L. Huseman, retired.

**John Kronstadt**, Superior Court of Los Angeles County, succeeding Juelann K. Cathey.

**Dennis J. Landin**, Su-

perior Court of Los Angeles County, succeeding Ann Kough, retired.

**Franz E. Miller**, Superior Court of Orange County, succeeding Richard Weather- spoon, retired.

**Rafael A. Ongkeko**, Superior Court of Los Angeles County, succeeding J. D. Smith, retired.

**Rosendo Pena, Jr.**, Superior Court of Fresno County, succeeding John M. Gallagher, retired.

**DeAnn M. Salcido**, Superior Court of San Diego County, succeeding Victor E. Ramirez, retired.

**John Hideki Sugiyama**, Superior Court of Contra Costa County, succeeding John F. Van De Poel, retired.

**Josephine Staton Tucker**, Superior Court of Orange County, succeeding Richard D. Fybel, appointed to the Court of Appeal, Fourth Appellate District.

### EXECUTIVE OFFICER APPOINTMENTS

**Stephen V. Love**, Superior Court of San Diego County, succeeding Stephen Thunberg. ■

## Data Center Debut



On September 18, employees of the Superior Court of Orange County attended an open house to tour and learn about the court's new data center. According to court officials, it is the first state court data center to run completely independently of a county system. Housed in a new, specially constructed, fireproof facility at the Central Justice Center in Santa Ana, the new center runs all of the court's case management systems. *Photo: Courtesy of the Superior Court of Orange County*

## NEWS FROM THE CALIFORNIA COURTS WEB SITES

The California courts' public Web site at [www.courtinfo.ca.gov/](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/) and Serranus, the courts' secure Web site, at <http://serranus.courtinfo.ca.gov/> continually add information to keep the public and the courts up to date on judicial programs and resources. Following are recent additions.

### New HR Web Site Goes Live

The new Human Resources Division section of Serranus includes information on benefits, classification, legislation and rules of court, recruitment, training and education, labor relations, personnel policies, and more. Visit the site at <http://serranus.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/hr/>.

### Case Management System Update

The second application period for case management system certification has ended, and evaluations will be completed by the end of November. For certification results, applicants and providers, and module information, visit <http://serranus.courtinfo.ca.gov/cmsupdate.htm>.

### Easier Reference

The newly revised reference section of the courts' public site improves searches by providing a brief summary with each title. The listings now include resources from the Center for Families, Children, & the Courts' Web site. To view the revised section, visit [www.courtinfo.ca.gov/reference/](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/reference/).

## Mildred L. Lillie 1915–2002

Justice Mildred L. Lillie, the longest-serving judge in California history and one of the first female appellate justices in the state, died October 27 in Los Angeles. She was 87.

"Presiding Justice Mildred L. Lillie served with great distinction as a member of the California judiciary for a remarkable 55 years," says Chief Justice Ronald M. George. "She was a person of great insight, vast experience, and keen wit, a true pioneer for women in her profession."

Justice Lillie was admitted to practice law in California in 1938, the same year she received her law degree from the University of California at Berkeley. After serving in the U.S. Attorney's Office in Los Angeles and engaging in private law practice, she was appointed to the Los Angeles Municipal Court in 1947. She was elevated to the Los Angeles Superior Court two years later, and in 1958 she was named associate justice of the Court of Appeal, Second Appellate District, Division One.

In 1984, Justice Lillie was named presiding justice of the court's Division Seven. She also served two terms as administrative presiding justice of the Second Appellate District, from 1988 to 1989 and from 1991 to 1996. Justice Lillie served on the Judicial Council from 1961 to 1963 and from 1987 to 1989.